



Harpers Ferry Center 2003 Annual Report

COLLABORATION



EXPERIENCE

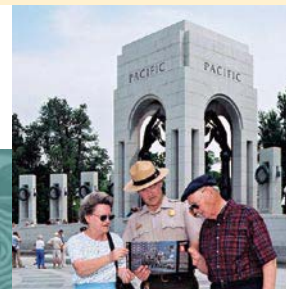
VISION



VALUE



CREATIVITY



CHANGES





Illustration by Chris Gall, Courtesy of Qualteam, Inc

Vision Statement

Harpers Ferry Center

We are accountable for products and services that meet National Park Service standards, are of good value, and are delivered on time. We design and continually improve our work processes so they are effective and easily understood.

We identify, study, and apply new communication technologies and methods.

We recruit, hire, and retain a workforce that reflects the diversity of the United States population and is highly motivated, well trained, informed, properly equipped, and recognized for its accomplishments.

We establish and evaluate the standards for National Park Service media products and services and evaluate media products for effectiveness.

We develop processes to share our media knowledge, skills, and abilities to expand servicewide capacity.

A LETTER FROM THE MANAGER

For more than 20 years Harpers Ferry Center has provided the National Park Service with professionally designed, accurate, and user-friendly interpretive media. Through collaboration with our park partners Harpers Ferry Center's indoor and outdoor exhibits, publications, audiovisual programs, historic furnishings, interpretive plans, and websites have enhanced the park experiences of millions of visitors. These interpretive media enhance visitor experience and appreciation of our national parks and the resources they protect and celebrate. During 2003 Harpers Ferry Center applied its 2,000-plus years of combined staff media experience and its extensive network of contractors on 597 media projects across the National Park System.

Harpers Ferry Center undertook many changes in 2003. We implemented new work processes, improved communication, and built a more efficient and flexible organizational structure. We continue to monitor and evaluate these changes and make adjustments as needed to achieve our goals as well as those of the National Park Service. Parks will find the "new" Harpers Ferry Center more responsive, more accountable, easier to work with, and better able to adjust to meet changing priorities and challenging economic realities. Parks will also find that Harpers Ferry Center's commitment to quality remains unchanged.

We are exploring new and innovative technologies to deliver park messages with greater effectiveness and efficiency. We continue to offer outreach and training that will enable parks to better manage their interpretive media needs. We pledge to increase the quality and quantity of communication with our park partners in a variety of ways.

Harpers Ferry will venture into new media territory during the next two years as we manage the implementation of a centralized park sign system contract. This program will produce high quality, durable park signs of consistent design for parks from Saipan to Maine.

Most importantly Harpers Ferry Center will continue to work closely and cooperatively with equally dedicated National Park Service field colleagues to ensure that America's love affair with its national parks remains vital and long lasting.

Gary Cummins

Celebrating the Centennial of Flight

Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park

Dayton Aviation Heritage National Historical Park is a study in effective collaboration and time management. With little time to prepare for the centennial of flight celebration in 2003, the park staff worked closely with experts from Harpers Ferry Center to meet the challenge.

The park comprises four distinct units, only two of which the National Park Service runs. The others are run by a non-profit group and by an Ohio state agency respectively. Because it is a new park, a full staff was not yet in place. "We involved every section of Harpers Ferry Center," said Larry Blake, Superintendent. "They helped us plan and coordinate with our partners. We relied on them to help us develop exhibits that were exciting, engaging, educational, and complementary of one another. In the end, everyone was happy."



Collaboration is at the heart of Harpers Ferry Center's identity. Teamwork drives our organization's culture—both internally and in our relationships with park clients, partners, and contractors. Today, collaboration is essential to meet rising standards of media excellence as projects require closer stakeholder participation and as parks strive to reach new audiences.

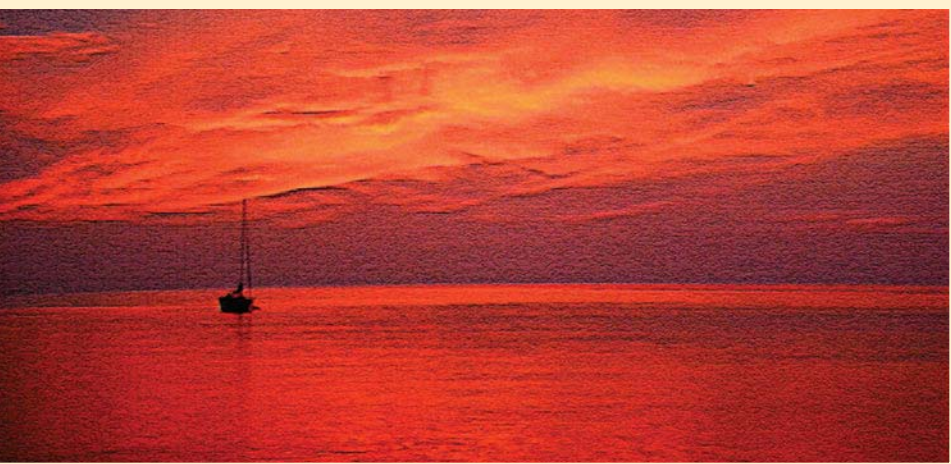
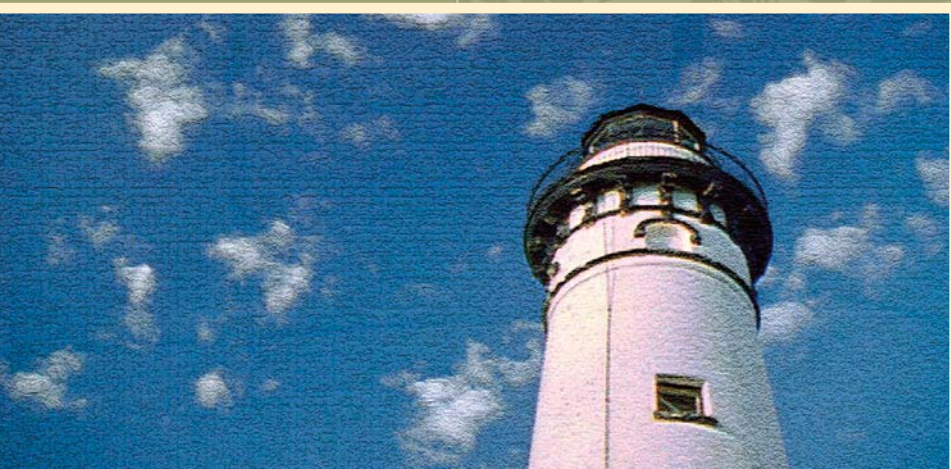
From the Center's opening in 1970, designers, planners, filmmakers, curators, cartographers, conservators, and writers have joined with administrative and business staff to achieve something greater than if each pursued their work separately. Harpers Ferry Center's best interdisciplinary teams bring diverse perspectives and experiences to the task of creating park brochures, indoor and outdoor exhibits, historic furnishings, audiovisual programs, and web sites. But while varied in our disciplines, we are united by the common goal of helping produce media that effectively and coherently link the tangible realities of the parks to the larger context of intangible meanings that describe and influence us as a nation.

In seeking ways to maximize collaboration, we recruited and trained project managers, whose central role is to facilitate the collective creative process, and an education specialist to bring a learning perspective into our thinking, planning, and work. An increasing part of the collaborative effort involves social science as part of the comprehensive evaluation of media products. Collaboration ensures that, as the visitor population diversifies, the messages and the ways that they are presented accurately reflect those changes.

Regardless of the media development path, Harpers Ferry Center seeks ways of sharing resources and information. By working together with park staff to generate creative solutions, our collaborative efforts are invigorated, providing greater impact for the public message and reaping significant benefits in terms of efficient use of our collective resources.

"On the Edge of Gichigami: Voices of the Apostle Islands"

Apostle Islands National Lakeshore



Digital Video Captures, Apostle Island Film, NPS

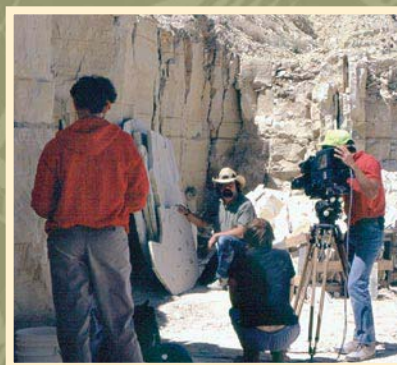
The sights and sounds of the Apostle Islands come to life in a new interpretive film produced by Harpers Ferry Center. "On the Edge of Gichigami: Voices of the Apostle Islands" interweaves dramatic year-round images with an original music score and the voices of more than two dozen individuals relating the islands' history and timeless allure.

The Harpers Ferry Center staff recorded some 40 hours of film footage, over several years, for the project.

The show was then cut on HFC's video editing system.

The finished product earned rave reviews at the park's visitor center in Bayfield, Wisconsin. The local newspaper praised its "breathtaking visuals." Superintendent Bob Krumenaker called the film "a work of art" and regional interpretive chief Tom Richter called it a "spectacular achievement."

Producer/Director Anne Tubiolo hopes the film "will



encourage people to explore the islands, learn the history, meet the people, and come away with stories of their own."

Creativity drives Harpers Ferry Center's determination that media showcase the National Park Service. We view our role as that of a catalyst in the collaborative process of developing products that reveal the underlying, and often invisible, meanings of park features. Through creative media solutions, we take park visitors beneath the Earth's surface, high above a wildfire to see its mosaic burn pattern, or back in time to view a damaged city the day after a Civil War battle. Together with dedicated park staffs, we excavate the invisible forces and truths that define a park, we invite visitors into a dialogue of discovery, and we show how those influences continue to affect ourselves and our special landscapes today, and for future generations to come.

It is vital that the interpretive media we present to the public reflect the National Park Service as a cohesive entity, relaying both the park's story and critical management issues. It is not enough simply to present a series of interesting facts about a subalpine meadow. Our true creative challenge is to convey the significance of this hardy but short-seasoned habitat and to evoke the long-range consequences if people continue to trample shortcut trails through the meadow.

At Harpers Ferry Center, we take pride in developing fresh solutions, using our years of experience in new and old technologies to discover effective combinations of words, pictures, and sounds that will help visitors get the most out of their time spent at parks, and will resonate long after they have left. To us, creativity means combining the talents of writers, artists, and designers with planners, managers, contractors, administrators, and park staff to continually come up with innovative approaches. This team dynamic generates new ideas and stimulates the creativity in each person working on a project. Creativity also means finding solutions that are on schedule and that are within budget.

Dickey Ridge Visitor Center

Shenandoah National Park

Dickey Ridge Visitor Center is one of two visitor centers that serve Shenandoah National Park in Virginia and is the first stop for the majority of park visitors.

In addition to serving as an introduction to the park, the "Experience Shenandoah National Park" exhibition endeavors to instill in visitors a sense of stewardship for the park and its resources. A primary goal of the exhibit is to provide an orientation to the wide variety of experiences available in the park. The exhibit provides multiple opportunities for hands-on interaction through the use of a tactile topographic model, tactile natural history models, and a variety of low-tech interactive exhibits.



Experience among the professionals at Harpers Ferry Center is not about longevity; it is about using the highest level of technical expertise and skill—informed and supplemented by nationally-recognized specialists—to analyze problems, question preconceptions, interview park staff and resource experts, examine the issues, research options, evaluate solutions being considered, and, with a full understanding of the National Park Service and its policies, make recommendations appropriate for the specific park’s needs, within its budget.

Harpers Ferry Center professionals can tackle the most daunting interpretive media projects. Their work ethic and years of experience and creativity aid in finding interpretive solutions that make any visit to our national parks more interesting and enjoyable.

Total immersion in developing interpretive media often leads to a kind of in-the-trenches experience. For example, while developing wayside exhibits for Andersonville National Historic Site, a Harpers Ferry Center planner-writer calculated the available space for each prisoner in that inhumanly crowded prison camp and taped a small perimeter within his office to represent each prisoner’s world. Most of the exhibits were developed from within those cramped confines.

At Harpers Ferry Center, this kind of experience fosters an eagerness to share what’s been learned with new employees, interns, and other agencies. Exposure to differing points of view and technological changes leads our experienced professionals to innovations that are at the very heart of the process and keep our work fresh and appealing.

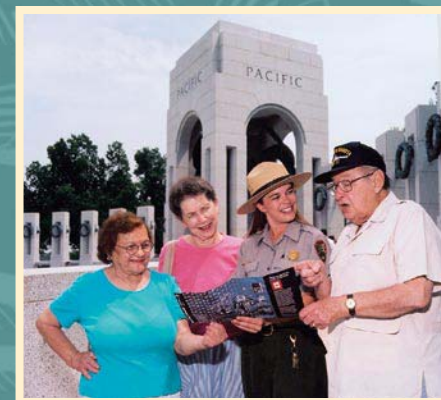
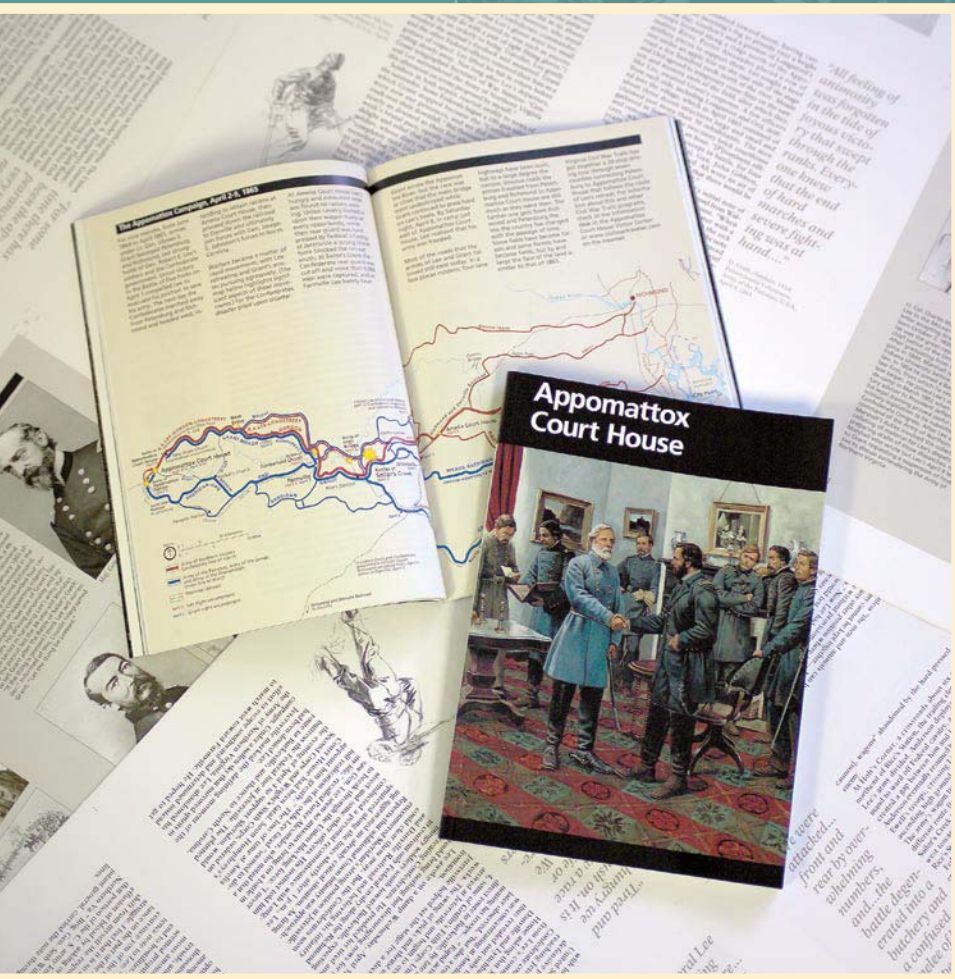
Our experience is an asset that the entire National Park Service can rely on to provide the visiting public with interpretive media that delight the senses, provoke the mind, and reaffirm the inherent value of these sacred places.

"The Campaign to Appomattox"

Harpers Ferry Center Publications

Describing Civil War battle scenes has long been a function of publications produced at Harpers Ferry Center, "but we wanted to go beyond the basic park story. We wanted to get to the stories behind the battles," said Ray Baker, Harpers Ferry Center editor of the book, 'The Campaign to Appomattox.'

Released in April 2003, in time for the anniversary of the surrender at Appomattox Courthouse, the book gives insight on the people who impacted the event. "Throughout the book, we address the larger view of the Civil War that the National Park Service has committed itself to," said Baker. This unique approach explores both the reasons the event occurred and the resulting changes. Most importantly, the book expands readers' understanding of the people behind the famous surrender.



World War II Memorial

Working with National Capital Parks and the American Battle Monuments Commission, Harpers Ferry Center produced the visitor information brochure for the new World War II Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

Value offered to parks by Harpers Ferry Center is an undeniable asset. Having a knowledgeable and experienced partner within the agency brings countless benefits to the parks we work with in planning, designing, and producing interpretive media. In fact, the National Park Service is the only federal land management agency that maintains a single centralized source for the development of interpretive media. It is this centralization that enables a holistic approach to project work, applying a business model to provide efficiency and cost-effectiveness in the use of available funding and the appropriate allocation of staff time. Applying those same principles, our technical consultation services and contracting assistance help parks make the best decisions in using their resources wisely.

Value is also reflected in the consistent standards of quality found in our work. By creating a consistent and high level of quality in content, presentation, and production, Harpers Ferry Center benefits not only individual parks, but the entire National Park System. We provide parks and visitors with a level of excellence they can rely on.

Another valuable service we provide to parks is ongoing media maintenance support. For more than 25 years, Harpers Ferry Center has helped parks revise, repair, and replace outdated and worn media. Our professionals assess media condition and provide the most cost efficient alternatives to replace substandard media.

The people who work at Harpers Ferry Center are valuable assets. We are career National Park Service employees who understand the organization and who are committed to common goals. We know the strengths and weaknesses of each type of interpretive media. We know vendors, procurement requirements, and technology. We know that telling people stories to illuminate our natural and cultural heritage is at the foundation of stewardship so important to all National Park Service employees.

UniGuide Sign System

National Park Service

On Sept. 29, 2003, National Park Service Director Fran Mainella signed into effect an order to formally adopt new National Park Service UniGuide sign standards. This marked the end of a long and intense effort to develop, test, review, and revise standards that provide comprehensive guidelines for the complete range of sign types used in national parks. UniGuide standards have already caught the attention of professional sign designers, having received an Honor Award from the Society for Environmental Graphic Design. In issuing the award, the judges said, "Hooray for the National Park Service! Finally, an understanding of what the user needs to create signage and wayside exhibits. Clearly great work went into testing and evaluation of color, typography, and materials. The end user was at the forefront of this project, and visitors will come to appreciate all the thoughtful work in this study."



Changes made during 2003 in the way we do business now allow us to provide better interpretive media services to the National Park Service. A year-long analysis of our mission, vision, goals, values, and core business led to a better organizational structure and more efficient business and work processes. These changes were made with only limited interruption to the flow of media products and services that Harpers Ferry Center provides to our park partners.

The most tangible change for park partners and other customers is that they now contact us via one phone number—**304-535-5050**. Through this streamlined approach, parks can receive help with technical questions, cost estimates, and project strategies and can easily begin new project work. Requests for assistance are routed directly to the right Harpers Ferry Center employee who can provide the help needed. No more employee directories or remembering names from the past. Just one phone number gets parks the help they need, while our contact staff follows up to make sure the caller was served properly.

Harpers Ferry Center has centralized how project costs are estimated and how jobs are tracked and executed. Our ability to account for the dollars spent and the value produced has become more efficient and effective than ever. We can provide accurate, consistent estimates so that performance can be tracked on funded projects. Professional project managers are assigned to all large media projects. They watch over project schedules, budgets, and communications and synchronize facility and interpretive media development.

When a project proposal is brought to Harpers Ferry Center, our staff works with the park staff to meet their target funding, budget, and schedule. We work together to consider the park's in-house experience and time constraints. We consider the various roles contracting can play in the project and we consider what resources Harpers Ferry Center can provide. Once a clear project strategy is devised, we sign a project agreement with the park that defines partnership roles and commits everyone to a clearly defined schedule and budget.

Harpers Ferry Center is a forward-looking organization dedicated to offering an ever-evolving range of professional skills and experience to National Park Service projects.

HARPERS FERRY CENTER SUMMARY OF MEDIA AND SERVICES

HOW WE TELL THE STORY OF A PARK

When people know the stories behind our national parks, they take home an enriched understanding of the importance of our entire park system as well as memories of places visited. Through various media, Harpers Ferry Center strives to bring each park's story to life, helping to build a community of stewardship for the continuity of these sacred places.

AUDIOVISUAL PRODUCTIONS

Seeing film footage of remote locations, hearing narratives from diaries written long ago, and interacting with a touch-screen program all help to bring a fresh view to our national parks. Our audiovisual producers plan, design, and produce inspiring programs that interpret the significance of a park's resources. A variety of presentation formats are produced ranging from large-format, surround-sound films to silent exhibit videos, touch-screen interactive programs to oral histories and natural soundscapes.

EXHIBITS AND MUSEUMS

Because people learn in many different ways, our museum exhibits are designed to illustrate park resources, teach concepts, and stimulate interest using a variety of techniques. We combine text, graphics, audio, video, models, mechanical devices, and lighting with natural,

historical, and cultural objects to help tell the stories of our parks in attractive, engaging ways.

HISTORIC FURNISHINGS

Transporting visitors back to eras significant to a park's history is important in providing a meaningful experience at our parks. Through historic furnishings, curators provide parks with authentic historical interiors commemorating major events, personalities, and daily life in America. Harpers Ferry Center provides complete historic furnishings services, including research, planning, acquisition, installation, and post-installation support.

PUBLICATIONS

Through books, maps, brochures, and other printed material, visitors can hold in their hands the stories of our parks. The official folders and handbooks developed by Harpers Ferry Center are known for their credibility, thoroughness, and unifying design. Attractively illustrated and fact-filled, the publications are coordinated with other interpretive media in the park for content and continuity of design.

WAYSIDE EXHIBITS AND SIGNS

Wayside exhibits describe the park's features and stories at the site where visitors are actually viewing them. Our planners help

select the best locations and topics, prepare text, and provide overall project coordination. Our designers ensure that photographs and illustrations are attractive and easy to understand. Our production managers oversee the manufacturing of panels and bases to ensure material durability and to take advantage of new technologies for quicker and more economical production.

Harpers Ferry Center has developed standards and guidelines for park signs, with the goal of bringing consistent quality and unified appearance to park signs. A servicewide sign manufacturing and management contract, in development, will enable parks to easily acquire high quality, long-lasting signs that meet National Park Service standards.

WEB AND INTERACTIVE MEDIA

Park stories are now being told and accessed through new technologies. Harpers Ferry Center offers expertise and contract assistance in developing computer and internet based interpretive media. The Center strives to create interactive experiences that connect people to park information and stories in dynamic and thought-provoking ways.

FISCAL YEAR 2003 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

COMPLETED PARK PROJECTS

MEDIA TYPE	
Audio Visual	71
Conservation	42
Exhibits	17
Historic Furnishings	6
Interpretive Planning	23
Publications	196
Wayside Exhibits	25
TOTAL	380

COMPLETED PROJECTS BY REGION

REGION	NO. OF PROJECTS
Alaska	9
HFC / WASO	7
Intermountain	71
Midwest	69
National Capital	25
Northeast	77
Pacific West	51
Southeast	79
TOTAL	380

EXPENDITURE BY FUND SOURCE

FUND SOURCE	\$ EXPENDED
Direct Charge from Parks	9,604,097
External Administration	10,000
Federal Highways	551,913
HFC Donations	118,707
HFC ONPS Cyclic	316,313
HFC Fee Demo	128,652
HFC Reimbursable	2,512,298
Line Item Construction	4,064,927
Line Item Planning	653,676
ONPS Base	11,772,863
ONPS Base-Major Rehab	474,292
ONPS Base-Publications	2,707,038
ONPS Tech Assist	89,703
Other	551,913
TOTAL	\$33,004,479

CONTRACTUAL SERVICES EXPENDITURE

SERVICES	\$ EXPENDED
Contractual Services	\$16,446,590
Interagency & Cooperative Agreements	\$54,536
TOTAL PROCUREMENT	\$16,501,126

OTHER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

AUDIOVISUAL TECHNICAL SERVICES

Provides audiovisual technical advice

EXHIBIT TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Helps parks carry out small exhibit projects

GRAPHIC COLLECTIONS AND SERVICES

Locates and acquires graphics needed for media presentations; maintains an archive of NPS-related graphics

INTERPRETIVE PLANNING

Provides interpretive planning expertise and services; prepares Long Range Interpretive Plans

MEDIA CONTRACTING

Helps parks contract for media services and products

MEDIA INVENTORY DATABASE

Maintains an inventory of existing interpretive media

NPS GRAPHIC IDENTITY

Establishes guidelines and standards for National Park Service graphic presentations

OBJECT CONSERVATION

Conserves artifacts sent by parks, many of which will be displayed in exhibits

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Helps parks manage interpretive media projects

PUBLICATIONS REPRINTS

Updates and reprints park brochures yearly

SIGN STANDARDS

Establishes guidelines and standards for National Park Service signs

TRAINING AND CONSULTATION

Provides interpretive media training and consultation regarding media projects

WAYSIDE EXHIBIT REHABILITATION

Helps parks replace damaged or outdated wayside exhibit panels and bases

WAYSIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Helps parks acquire wayside exhibits for small projects (6 exhibits or less)



Harpers Ferry Center

For more than 30 years the employees of Harpers Ferry Center have been dedicated to seeing that national parks offer the best interpretive media possible. As we move into the 21st Century we are committed to continuing that tradition of service.

Vision

Every person finds a personal connection to the preservation of their natural and cultural legacy.

Mission

Grounded in the National Park Service mission and values, Harpers Ferry Center provides leadership, expertise, and support to create media that effectively communicate National Park Service messages to the public.

Values

Creativity. We value the world of possibilities, the exploration of alternatives, and the advantages of taking risks.

Teamwork. We are dedicated to the accomplishment of common goals to meet our clients' and partners' needs by working as a unified organization sharing resources, information, and ideas.

Flexibility. Continuous personal and organizational development gives us the courage and ability to embrace the challenge and adventure of change.

Professionalism. We contribute our specialized knowledge and experience in an effective and responsive manner.

Integrity. We act and communicate honestly, fairly, and respectfully with one another, parks, and partners to ensure the mutual success of our relationships, our work, and our individual well-being.

Inclusion. We are advocates for messages that reflect the diversity of our nation, its people, resources, and heritage.